

Appln. No. 09/865,369

IBM Docket No. BOC9-2000-0065

Amendment dated June 22, 2004

Reply to Office action of Mar. 24, 2004

Docket No. 6169-201

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of March 24, 2004 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner noted that since claim limitation 9 was asserted to incorporate the limitations previously included in claims 10 and 11, that claim 9 should recite "wherein said probing and reporting step occurs in a first agent, and wherein the repeating step occurs in a second agent. Applicants have amended claim 9 according.

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has noted that claims 4-7, 12-15, 19-22, 27-31, and claim 38 would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have included the limitations previously included in claim 4 into claim 1, thereafter canceling claim 4. As claim 4 was not dependent upon any other intervening claims, the amended claim 1 should be allowable. Claims 5-8 are dependent upon claim 1 as amended, and should therefore be allowable, as well.

Similarly, Applicants have included the limitations previously included in claim 12 into claim 9, thereafter canceling claim 12. As claim 12 was not dependent upon any other intervening claims, the amended claim 9 should be allowable. Claims 13-15 are dependent upon claim 9 as amended, and should therefore be allowable, as well.

Claims 16-31 are the machine-readable storage equivalent claims corresponding to the method claims 1-15, which have been amended in like fashion. Accordingly, limitations of claim 19 have been included in claim 16 and limitations of claim 27 have been included in claim 24. Thus, claims 16-31 should be allowable.

Further, Applicants have included the limitations previously included in claim 38 into claim 32, thereafter canceling claim 38. As claim 38 was not dependent upon any other intervening claims, the amended claim 32 should be allowable. Claims 33-37 are dependent upon claim 32 as amended, and should therefore be allowable.

In light of the above, Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner

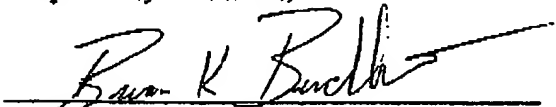
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believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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